

REMENDER • CRAIG • BOYD

DEADLY CLASS™



1988
23

W
2016

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WES CRAIG • Artist
JORDAN BOYD • Colorist
RUS WOOTON • Letterer
SEBASTIAN GIRNER • Editor

DEADLY CLASS created by
Rick Remender & Wes Craig

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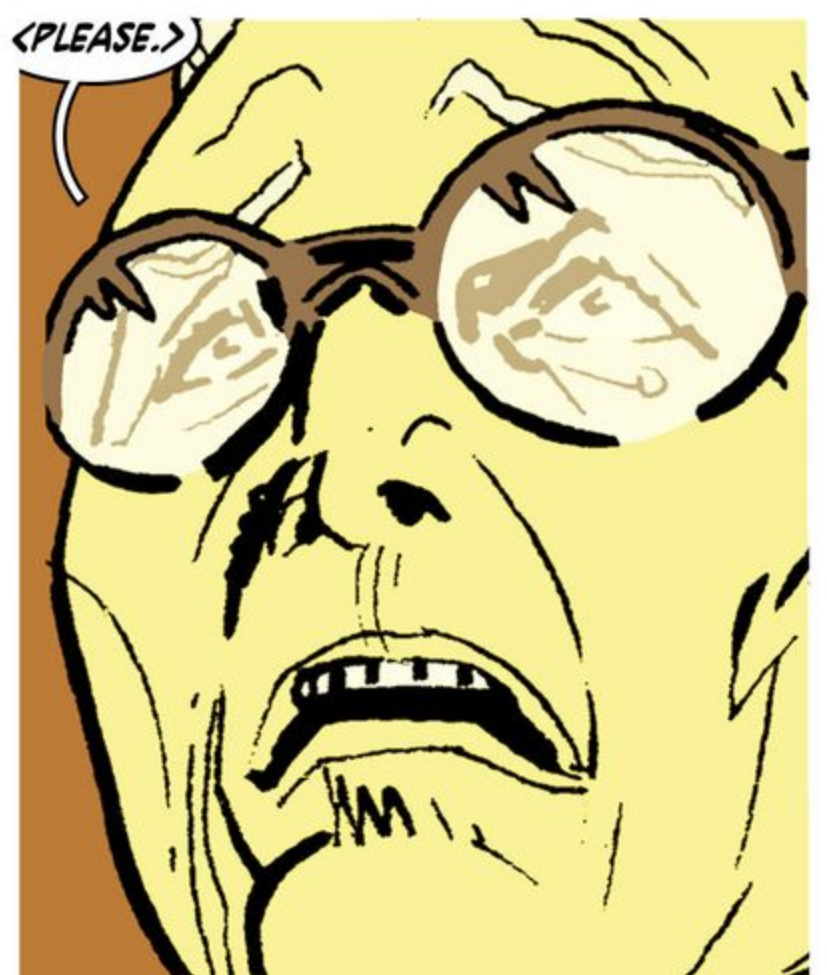
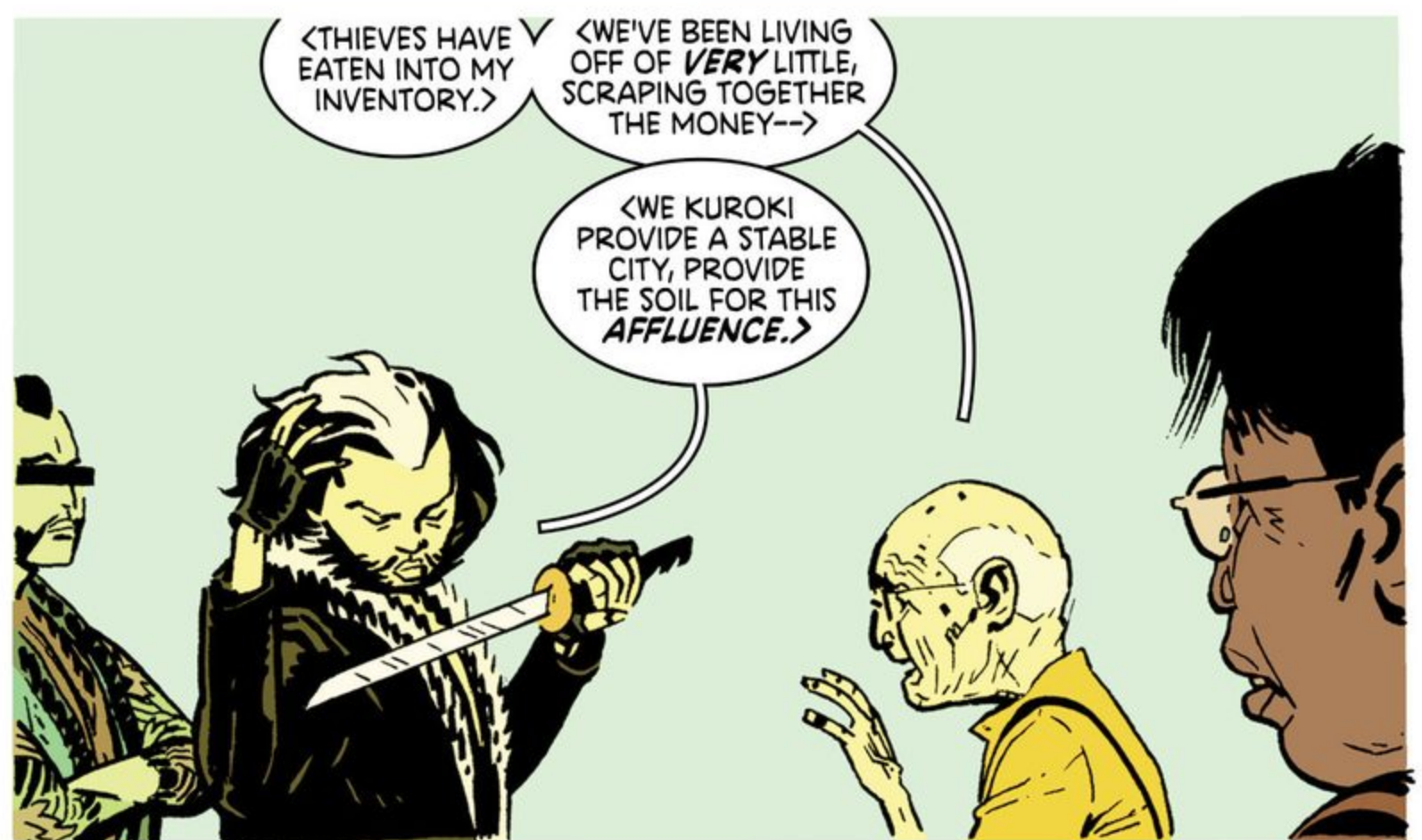
OCTOBER 5TH, 1988
TOKYO

-DING-

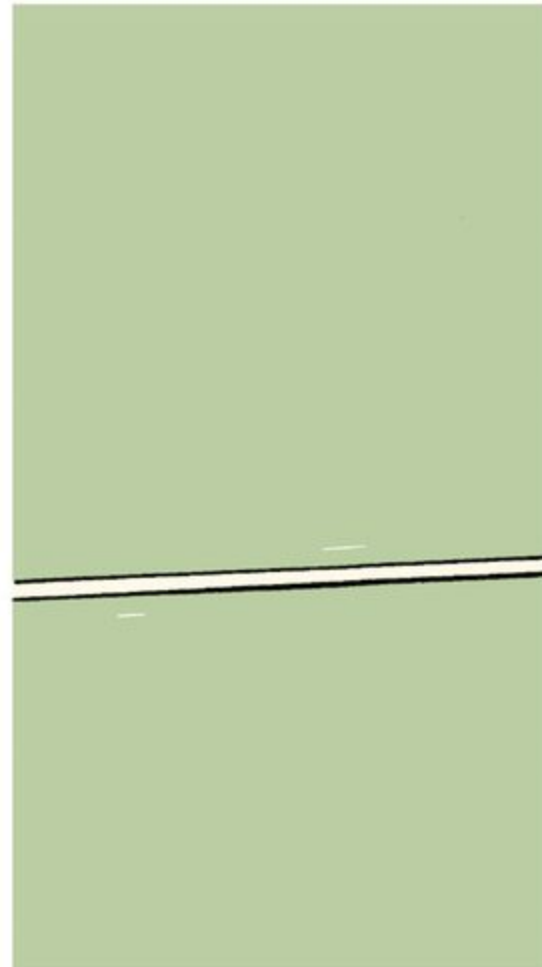
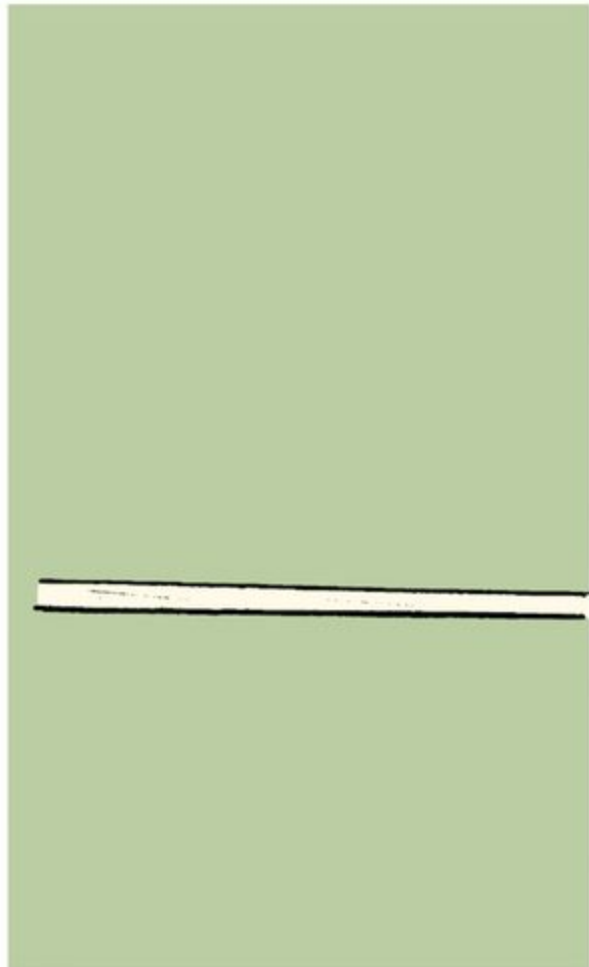
<I'LL BE WITH YOU IN JUST A-->*

*TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE









<...REMIND ME SO MUCH OF HIM.>

YURKK!

SHWKK

<SHIN!>

<NO! OH, NO...>

<PATRONS, I HAVE THE **DISPLEASURE** TO INFORM YOU THAT YOU ARE FREQUENTING A SHOP THAT HAS NOT PAID ITS INSURANCE.>

<YOU SHOULD NOT GO TO SUCH **UNSAFE** PLACES.>

<YOU-- COME HERE.>

<M-ME??>

<DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM SAYING HERE??>

<Y-YES...>

<CAN YOU ENSURE EVERYONE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNDERSTANDS THAT THEY SHOULD NEVER SPEND MONEY IN UNSAFE PLACES??>

<Y-YES.>

<I CAN.>



<YOU MAY GO.>



<LIFE MUST BE REFRESHED TO THRIVE. THE OLD CANNOT ADAPT TO THE NEW AND SO MUST BE SWEEPED AWAY.>

<IT IS A DIFFICULT TRANSITION-- BUT IT IS **NECESSARY.**>

<STILL, IT MAKES FOR A **SHITTY** DAY, DOESN'T IT?>

<WELL, ALLOW ME TO ADD SOME LIGHT TO YOUR DARKNESS, KENJI.>



<OUR SERVANT IN THE STATES HAS FOUND **YOUR SISTER.**>

<AND MY FATHER'S KATANA?>

<WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU IN A MATTER OF DAYS.>



<MAKE SURE THE OPERATIVE UNDERSTANDS, IT IS NOT **ONLY** THE SWORD I WANT...>



<"...I WANT SAYA BROUGHT HOME.">

I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU.

BECAUSE YOU ARE **CAGED** IN BY ETHICS.



HERE WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SUFFER **MALLEABLE** CONSTRUCTS BUILT ONLY TO MAKE ONE FEEL SUPERIOR.

YOU ARE WEAK, OR YOU ARE STRONG--
CHOOSE.



ETHICS SERVE ONLY

TO MAKE YOU

VULNERABLE.

THE REAL WORLD **DOES NOT** RUN ON ETHICS.



OOF!

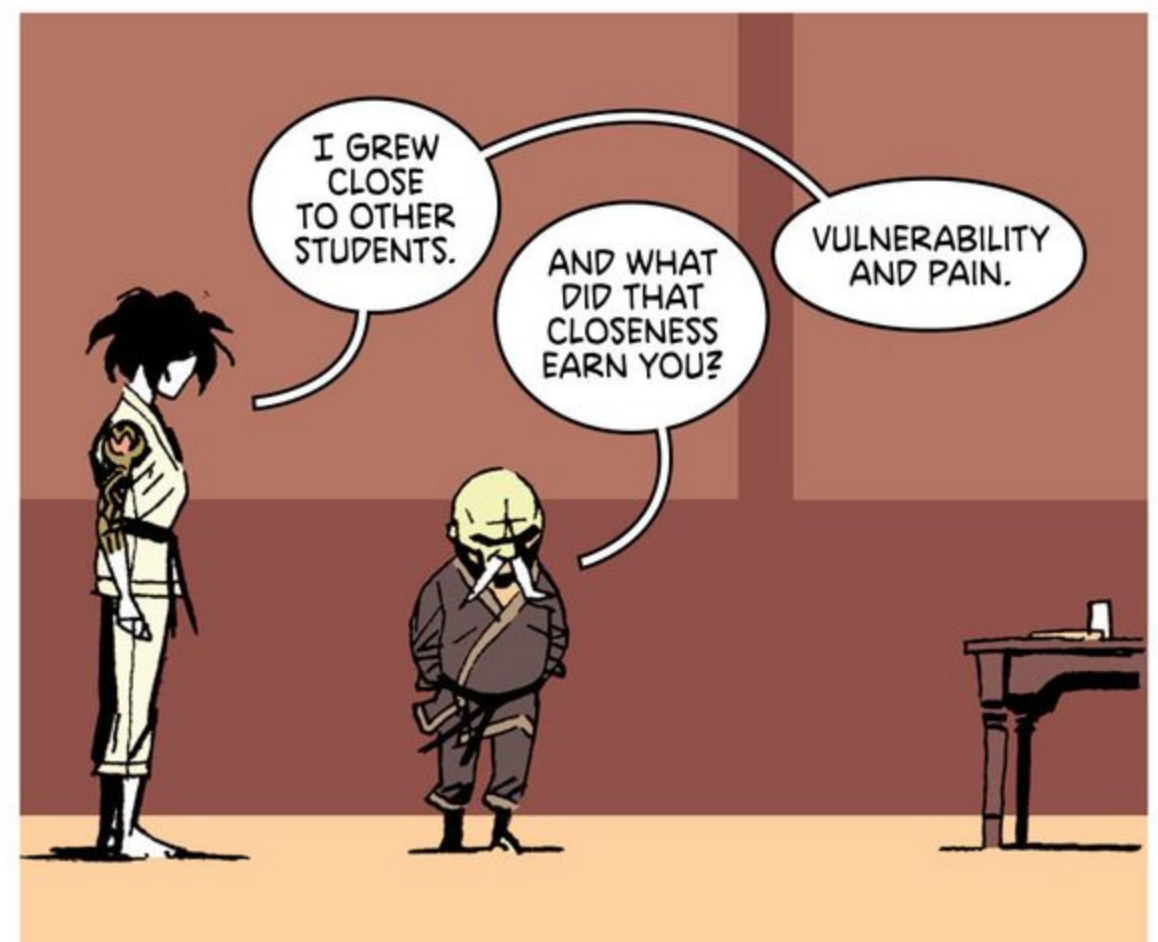
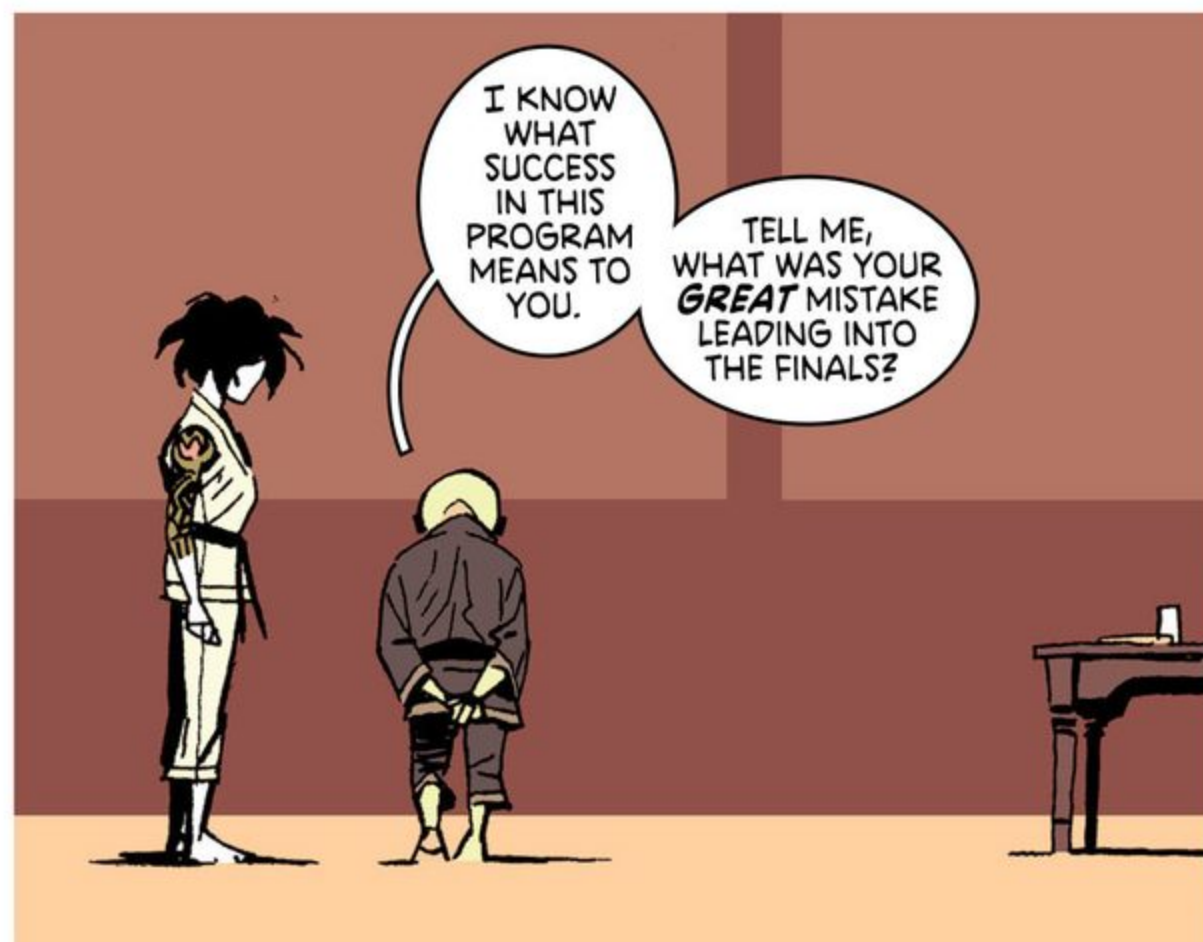


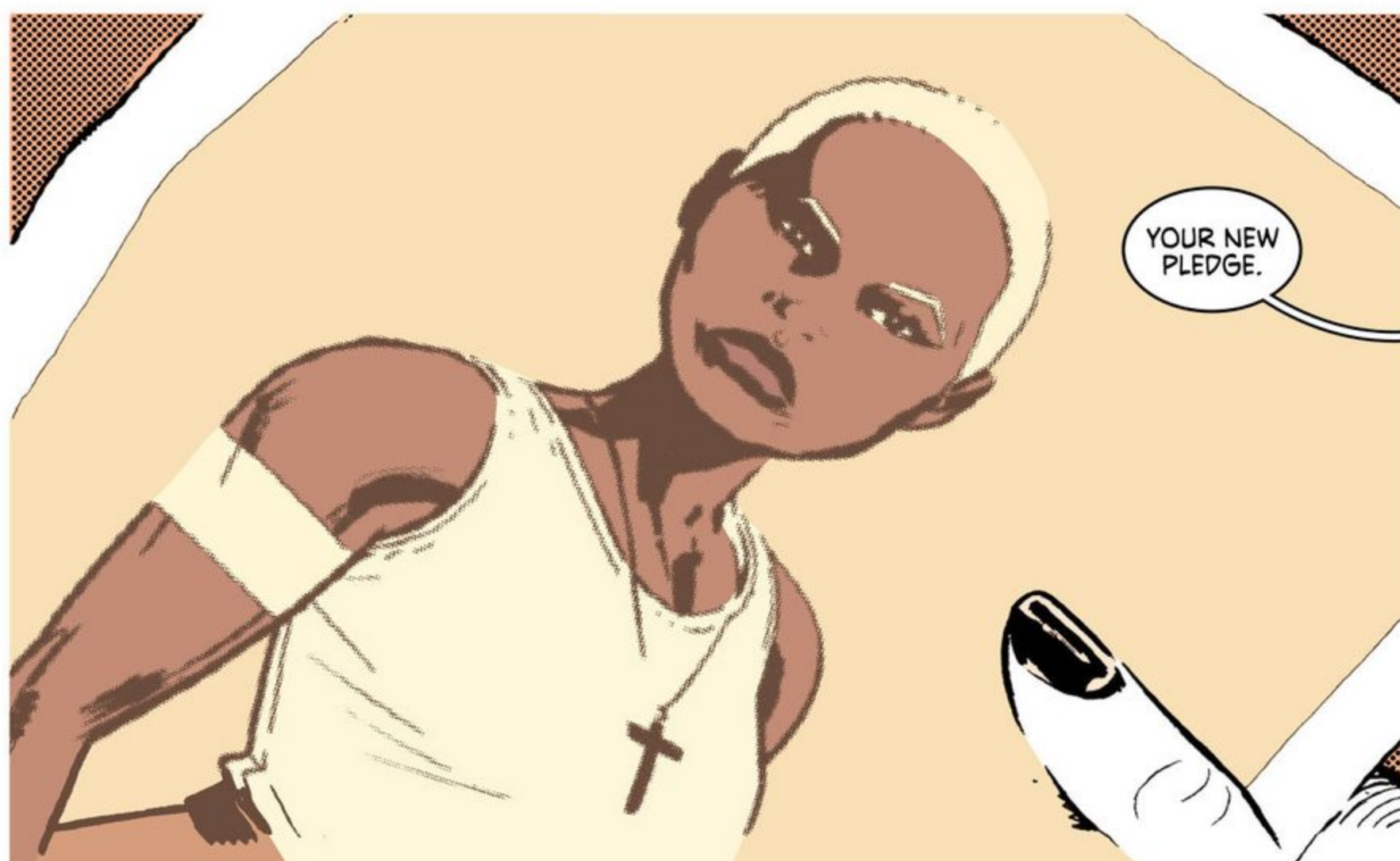
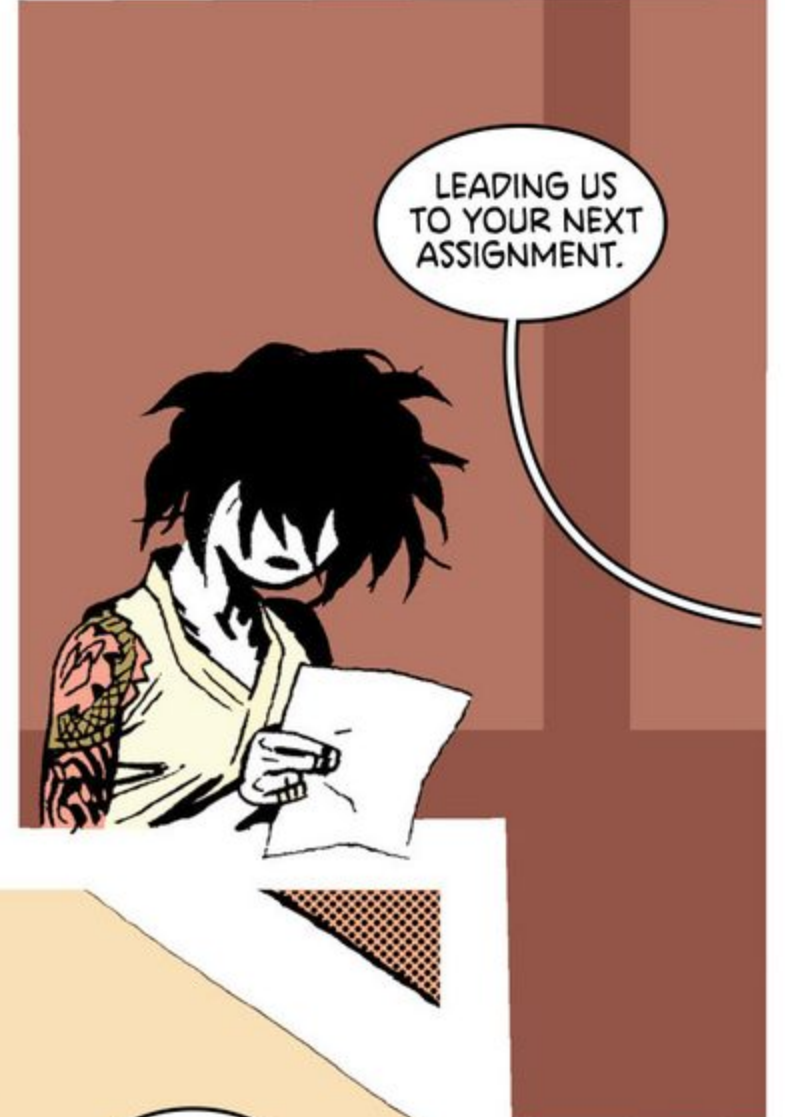
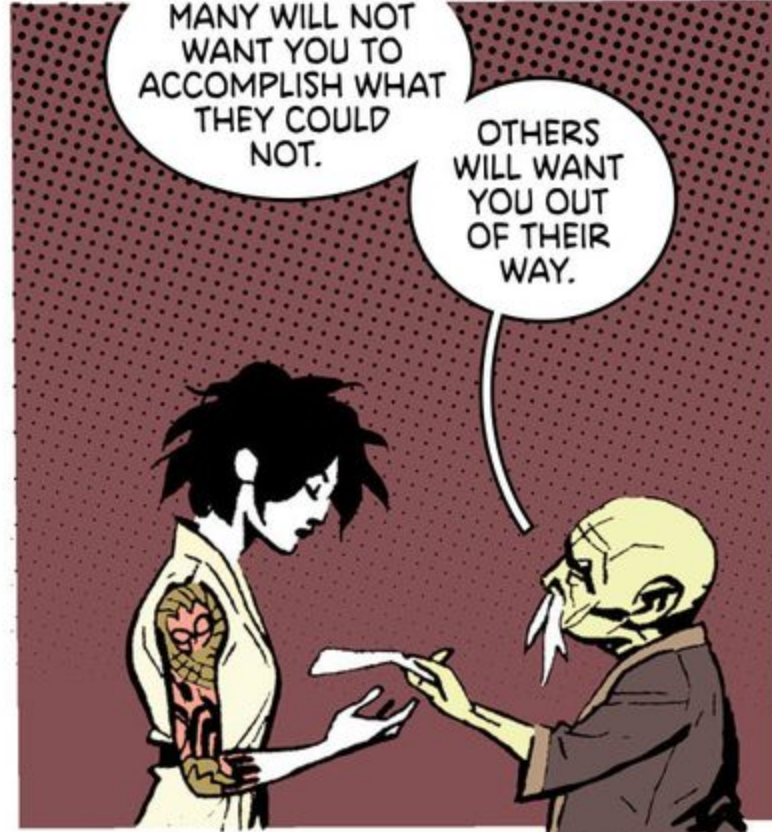
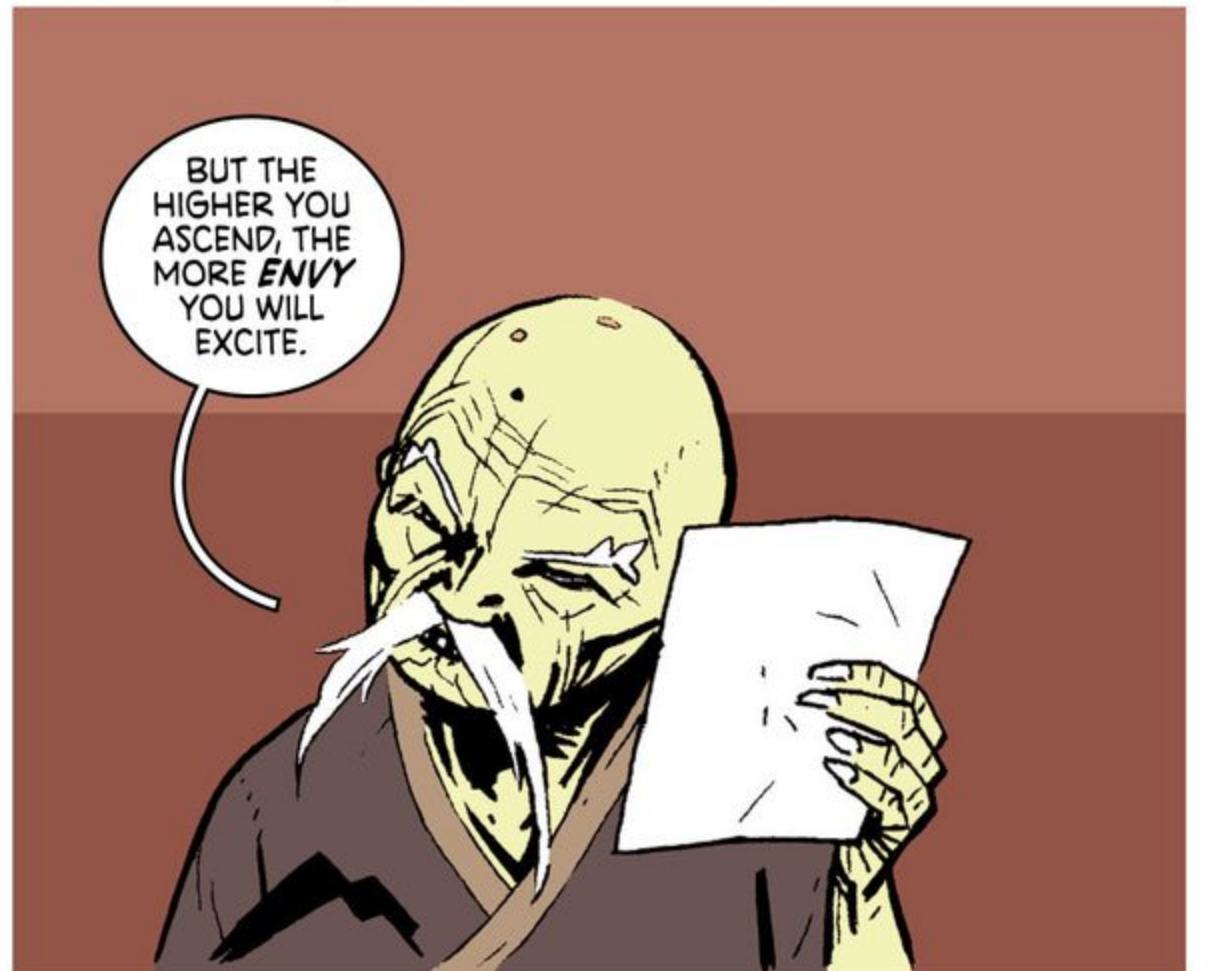
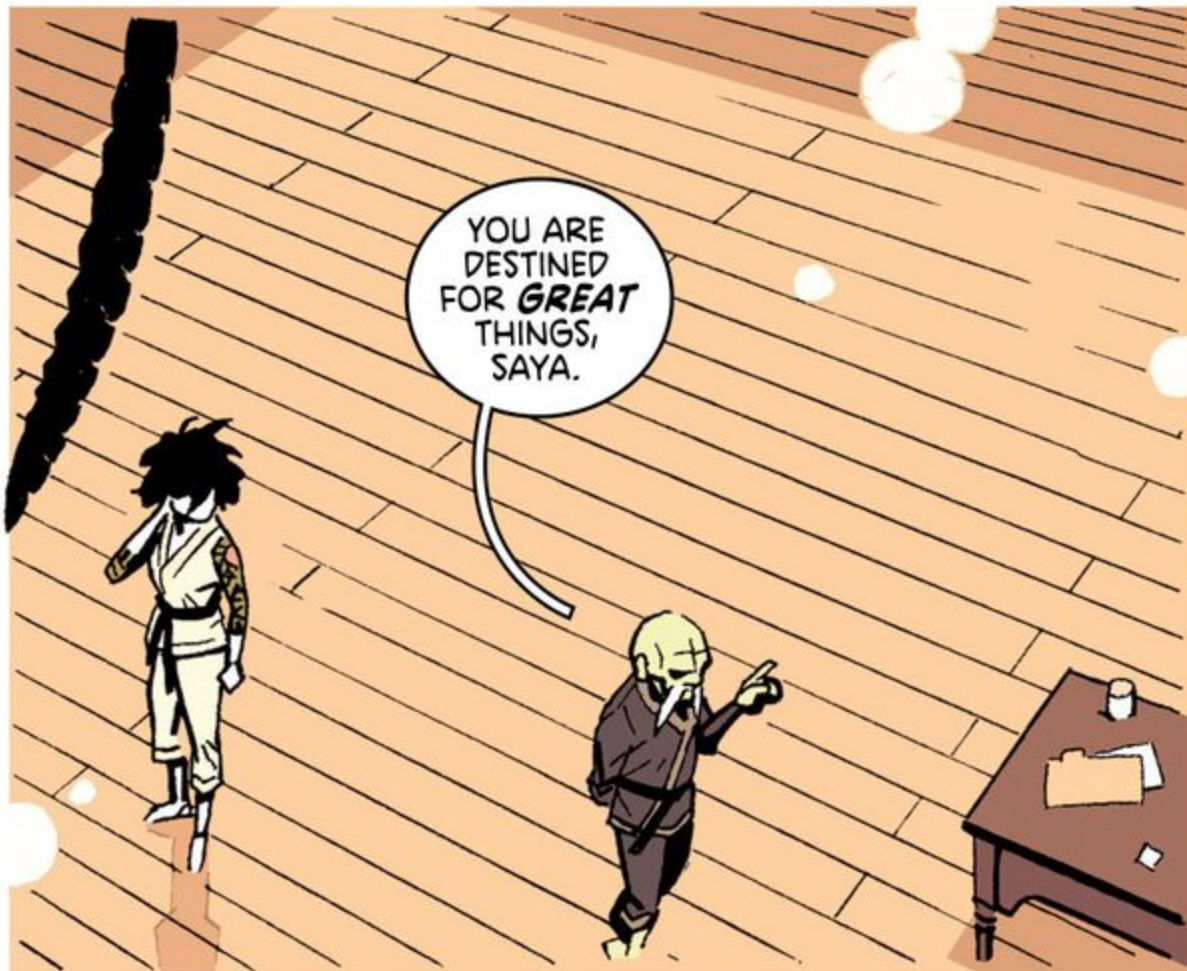
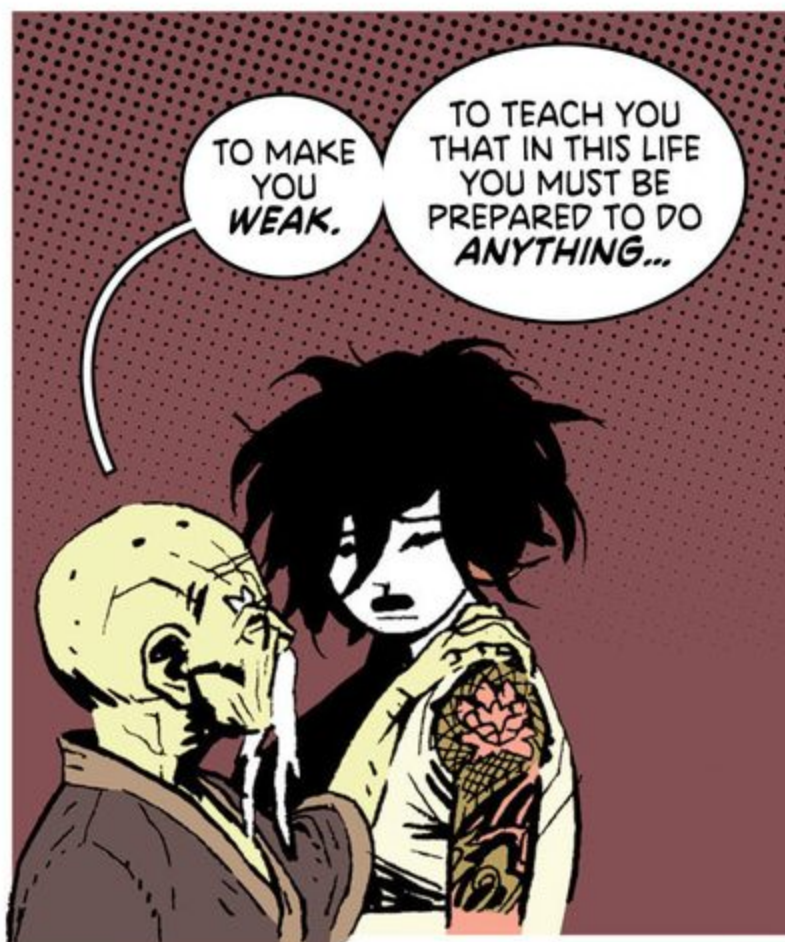
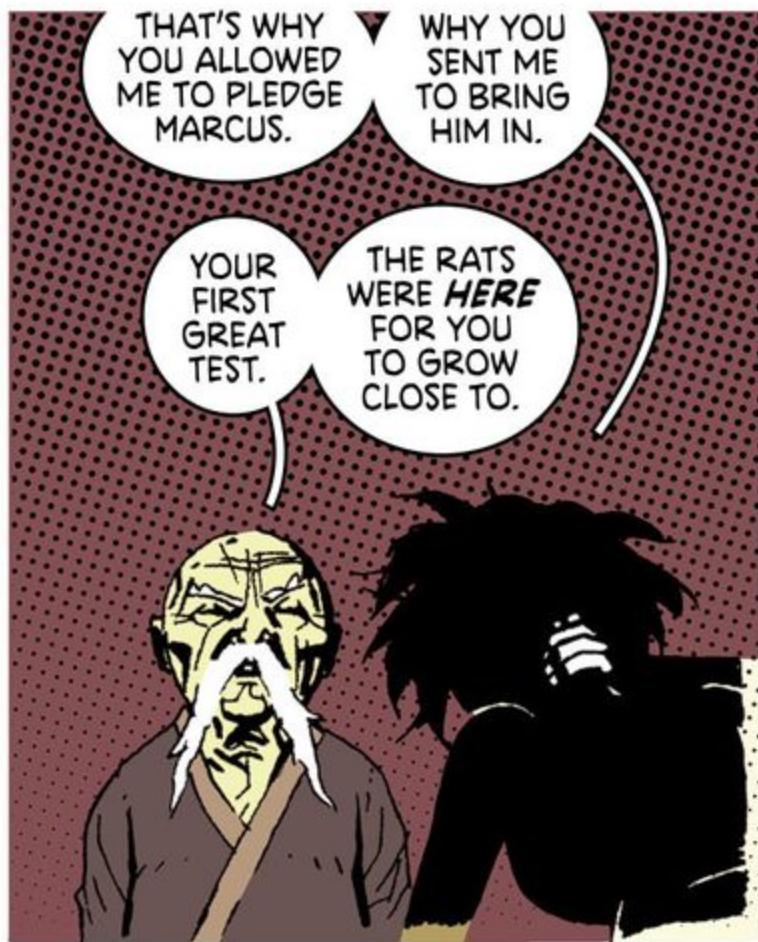
ETHICS HELD YOU BACK BECAUSE OF MY **AGE** AND SIZE.

THAT IS MY STRENGTH.

BEING **UNDERESTIMATED** IS A GIFT.

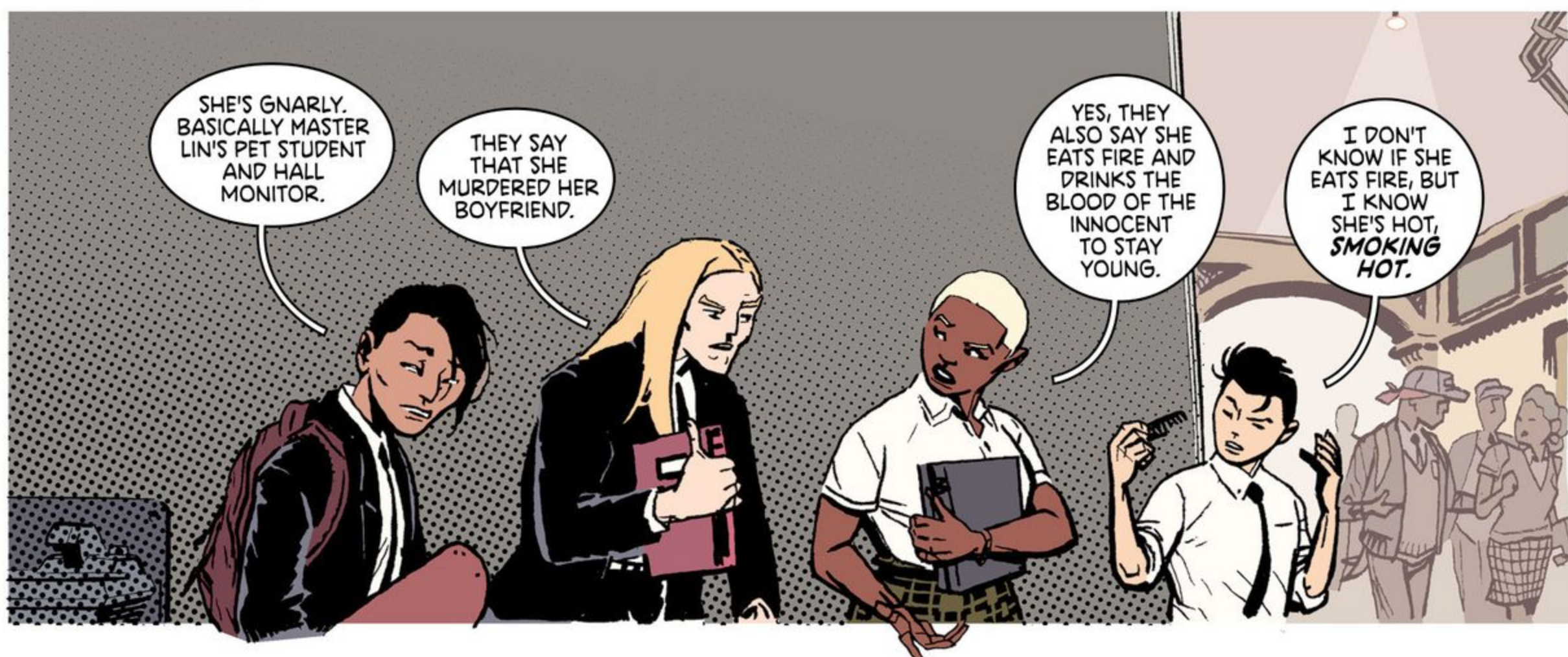
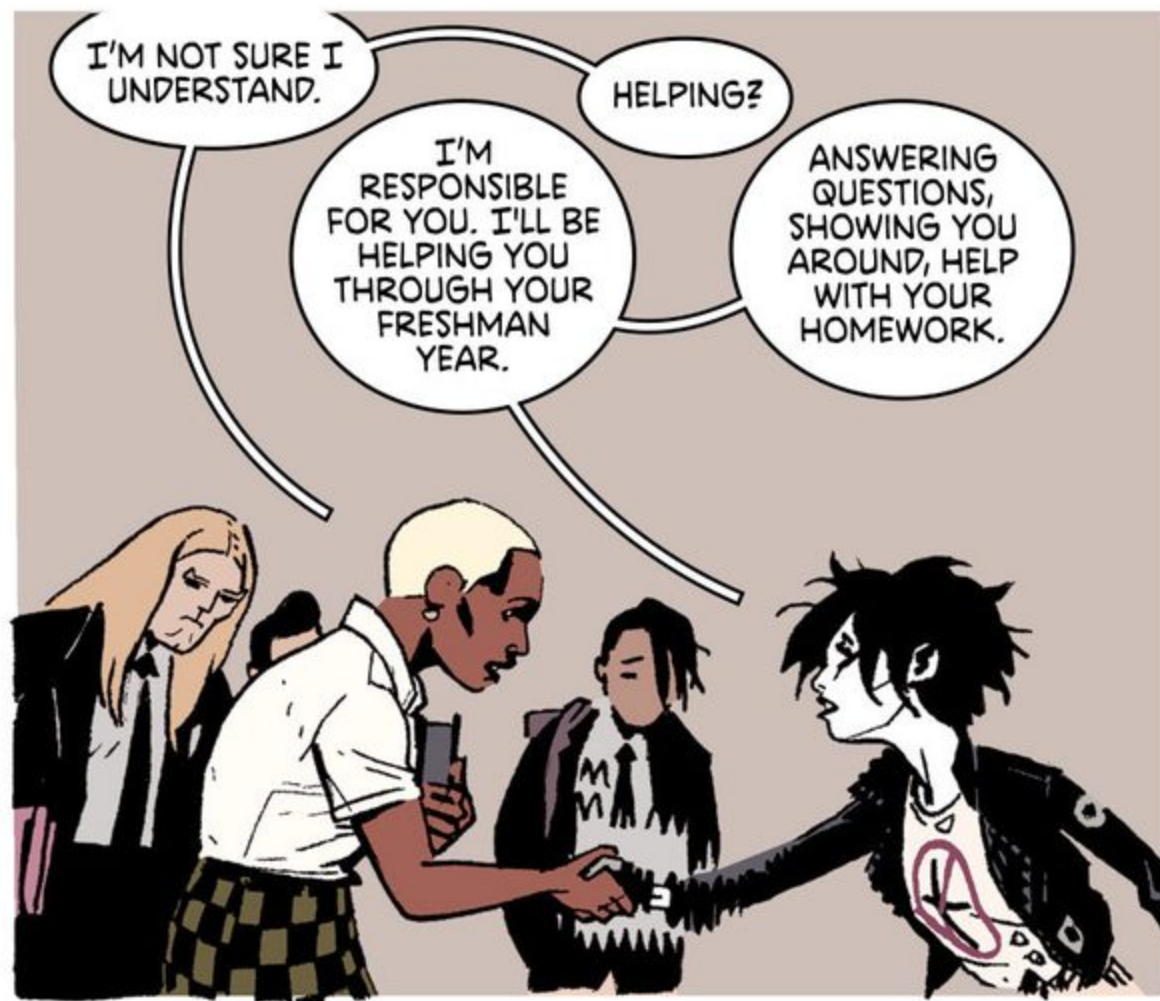
IT FORCES YOU TO WORK **HARDER**, ACCOMPLISH **MORE.**





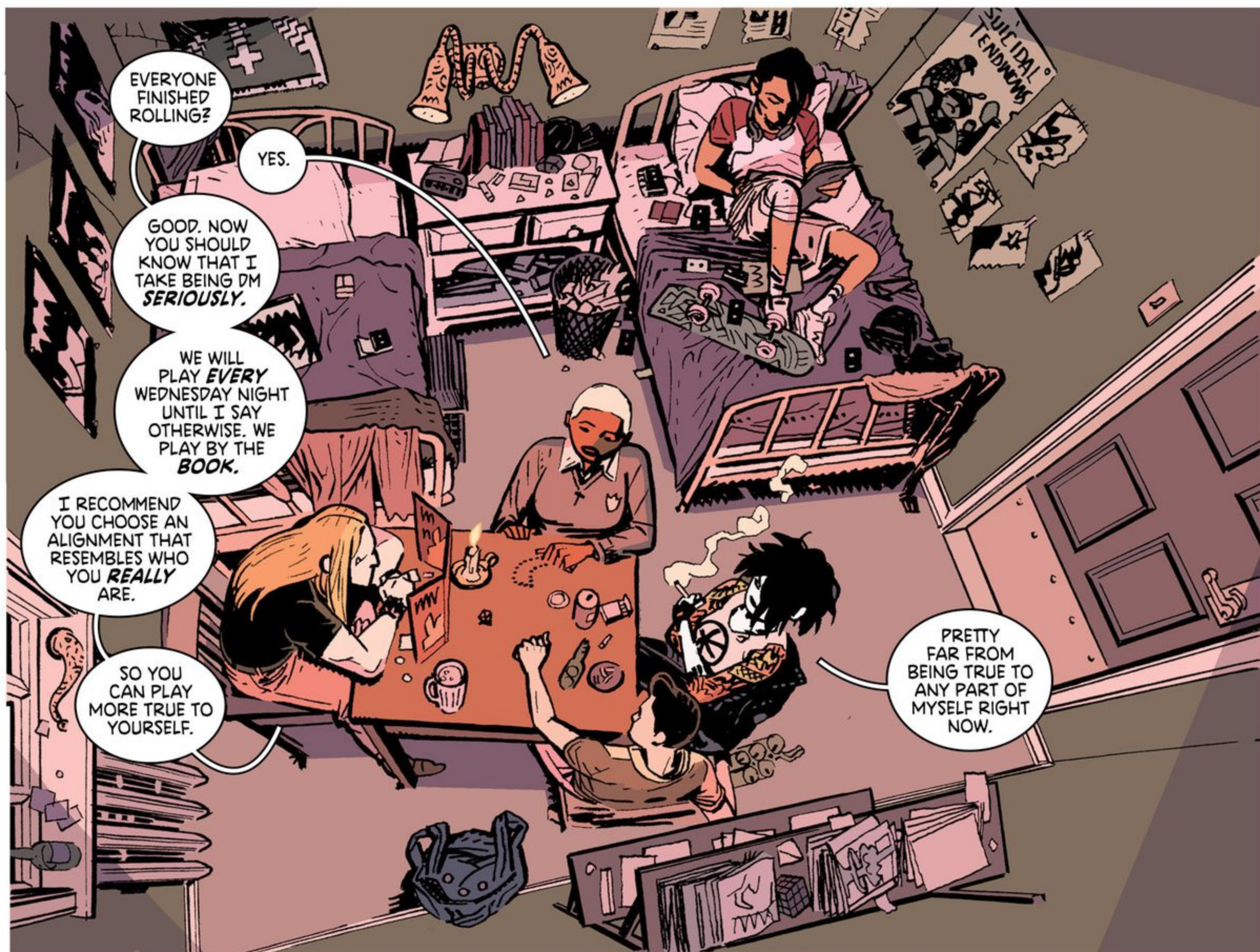








WHY SIT AROUND WITH YOU KOOKS CHASING DRAGON TALES WHEN I CAN CHASE SOME REAL TAIL.



EVERYONE FINISHED ROLLING?

YES.

GOOD. NOW YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I TAKE BEING DM SERIOUSLY.

WE WILL PLAY *EVERY* WEDNESDAY NIGHT UNTIL I SAY OTHERWISE. WE PLAY BY THE *BOOK*.

I RECOMMEND YOU CHOOSE AN ALIGNMENT THAT RESEMBLES WHO YOU *REALLY* ARE.

SO YOU CAN PLAY MORE TRUE TO YOURSELF.

PRETTY FAR FROM BEING TRUE TO ANY PART OF MYSELF RIGHT NOW.

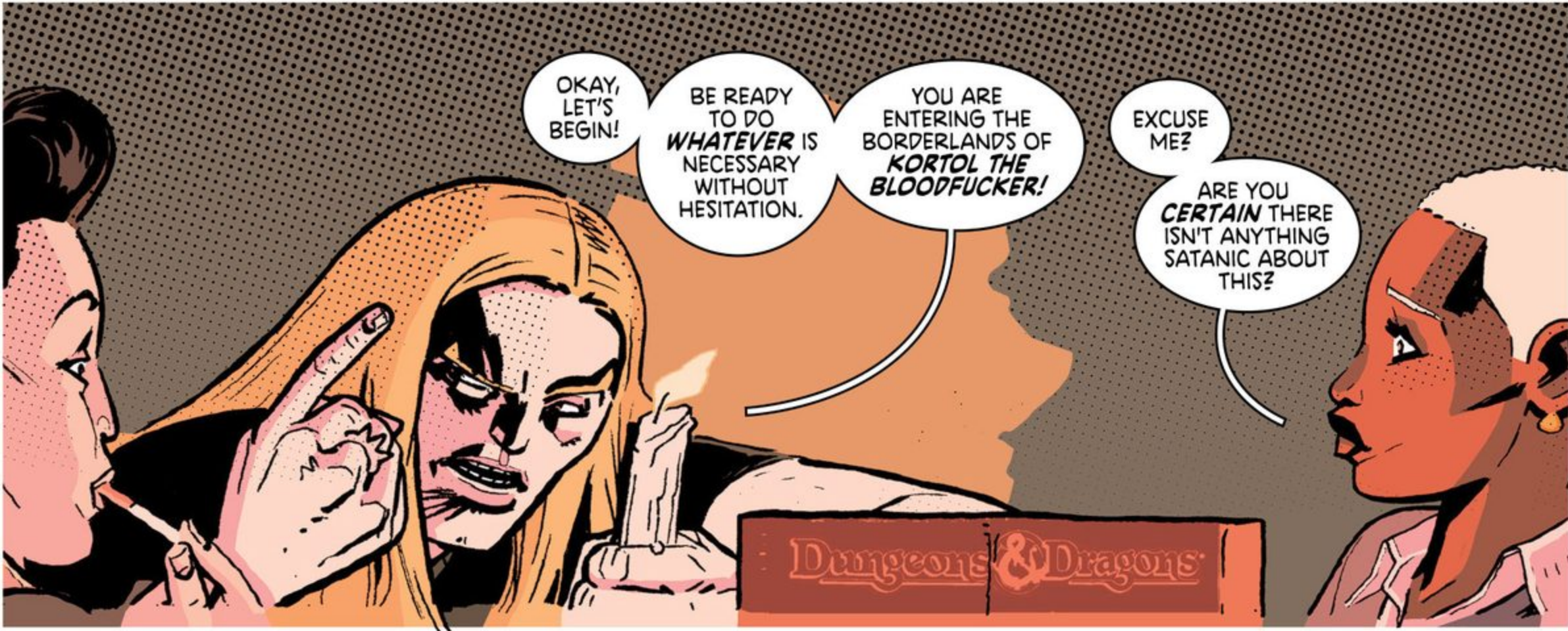


DON'T BE A SNOB. THIS IS GOING TO BE THE MOST FUN YOU'VE EVER HAD, AND YOU'LL FEEL LIKE AND ASSHOLE LATER HAVING TO REWIND ON YOUR PUNK ROCK APATHY.

C'MON, MAN.

RELAX.

IT'S JUST A KID'S GAME.



SQUANT THE SECRETIVE!

HALF GOBLIN AND HALF HUMAN. A THIEF WHO STEALS JEWELS **AND** HEARTS. I LOVE POISON KNIVES AND THINK MAGIC IS BULLSHIT.

MY CRIMSON CAPE, CREATED DEEP IN THE NINE HELLS, DOUBLES MY STEALTH.

MY ALIGNMENT: **CHAOTIC NEUTRAL.**



GLADERON, KNIGHT PRIESTESS.

I USE THE **BRIGHT SWORD** THAT HEALS MY COMPANIONS AND REVEALS DARK TRUTHS WITH THE POWER OF **POSITIVE LIGHT.**

MY ALIGNMENT IS **GOOD**, AND I AM A SOLDIER OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.



WHAT?!

NO.

YOU CAN'T-- THERE IS **NO SUCH THING** AS A CHRISTIAN GOD IN THIS WORLD.



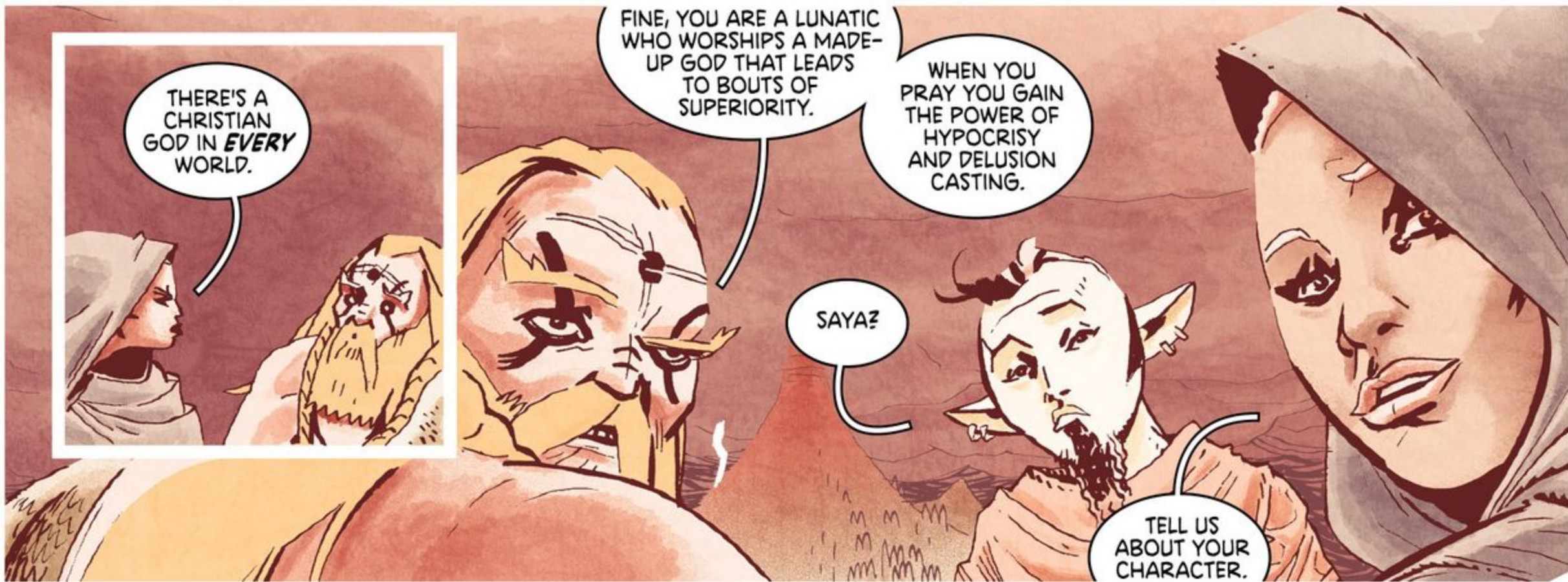
THERE'S A CHRISTIAN GOD IN **EVERY** WORLD.

FINE, YOU ARE A LUNATIC WHO WORSHIPS A MADE-UP GOD THAT LEADS TO BOUTS OF SUPERIORITY.

WHEN YOU PRAY YOU GAIN THE POWER OF HYPOCRISY AND DELUSION CASTING.

SAYA?

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER.

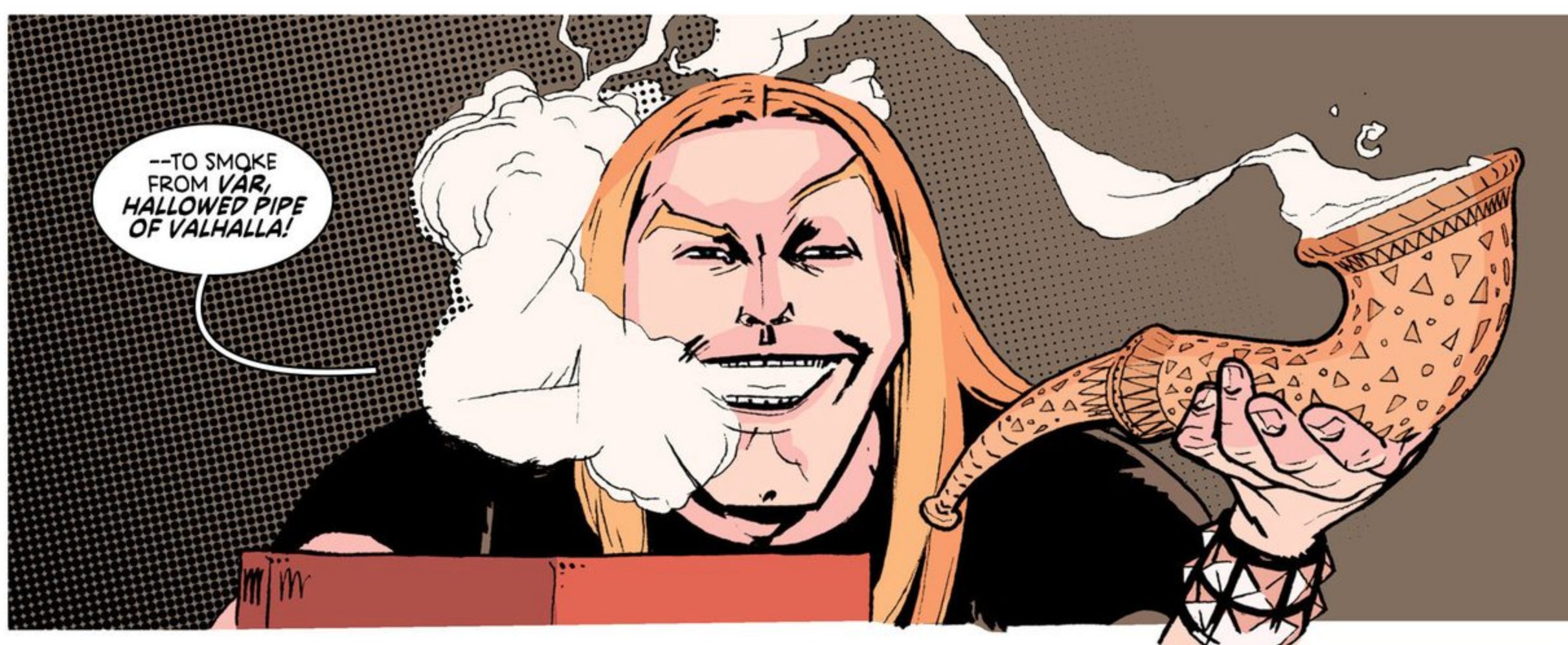
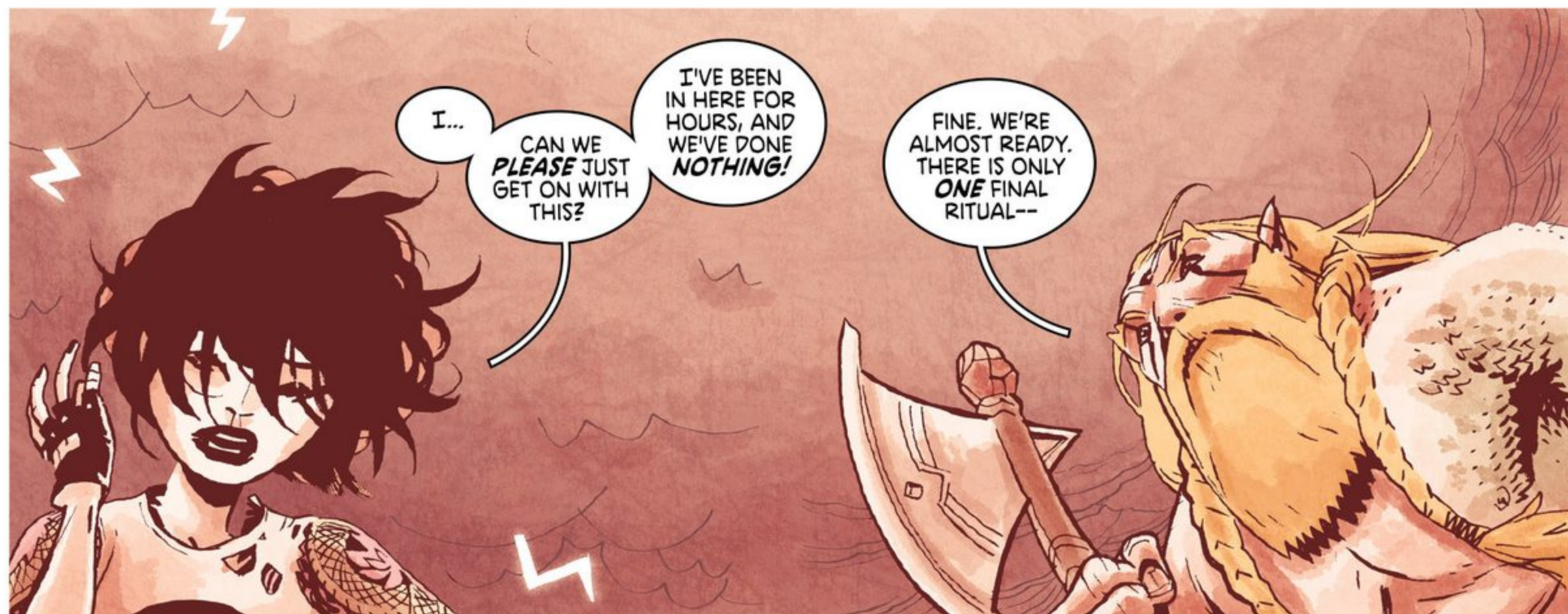


SIGH

UM... ALL RIGHT, I GUESS MY NAME IS SAYA THE EMBARRASSED.

I'M A TIRED HUMAN.





SIX HOURS LATER

"THE LONG TRAIL TO THE ALTAR IS SUDDENLY SWARMING WITH OGRES AND HOBGOBLINS."

"THEY LEARNED ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN'S MISSION WHEN SQUANT THE SECRETIVE WAS RUNNING HIS MOUTH TO ANYONE WHO'D LISTEN BACK IN THE RANSACKED VILLAGE."

RETURN
THE
RELIC!

PUSH
FORWARD!
WE'RE ALMOST
THERE!

WHAMDANGO!

YERAGH!

WAMDZ

YOUR
FOUL SOUL
IS RETURNED
TO HELL!





"SQUANT MAKES IT TO THE TOP OF THE HILL TO FIND THE RED OGRE."

"WHAT DO YOU DO?"

I'M GOING TO CHARM HIM. REMIND HIM I TRADED HIM THAT SWEET RING WE FOUND FOR A DATE WITH HIS BAR WENCH.

"ROLL 2D6."



"THE RED OGRE IS NOT CHARMED, AND HE CUTS SQUANT'S ARM CLEAN OFF."

WHAT?!



"THERE IS A DARKNESS GROWING AROUND THE STEPS. THE RED OGRE CAN BE HEARD CHANTING."

I RUN UP TOWARDS THE RED OGRE, KATANA PULLED.

I GUARD THE ROTTEN RELIC!



THIS IS SOME BULLSHIT!

MY CHARISMA IS THROUGH THE ROOF! I GAVE THAT DUDE THE RING HE WAS AFTER!

"SQUANT SPENDS HIS TURN SCREAMING AT THE RED GIANT. AS HE DOES THE GIANT MURMURS SOMETHING INTO THE RING..."

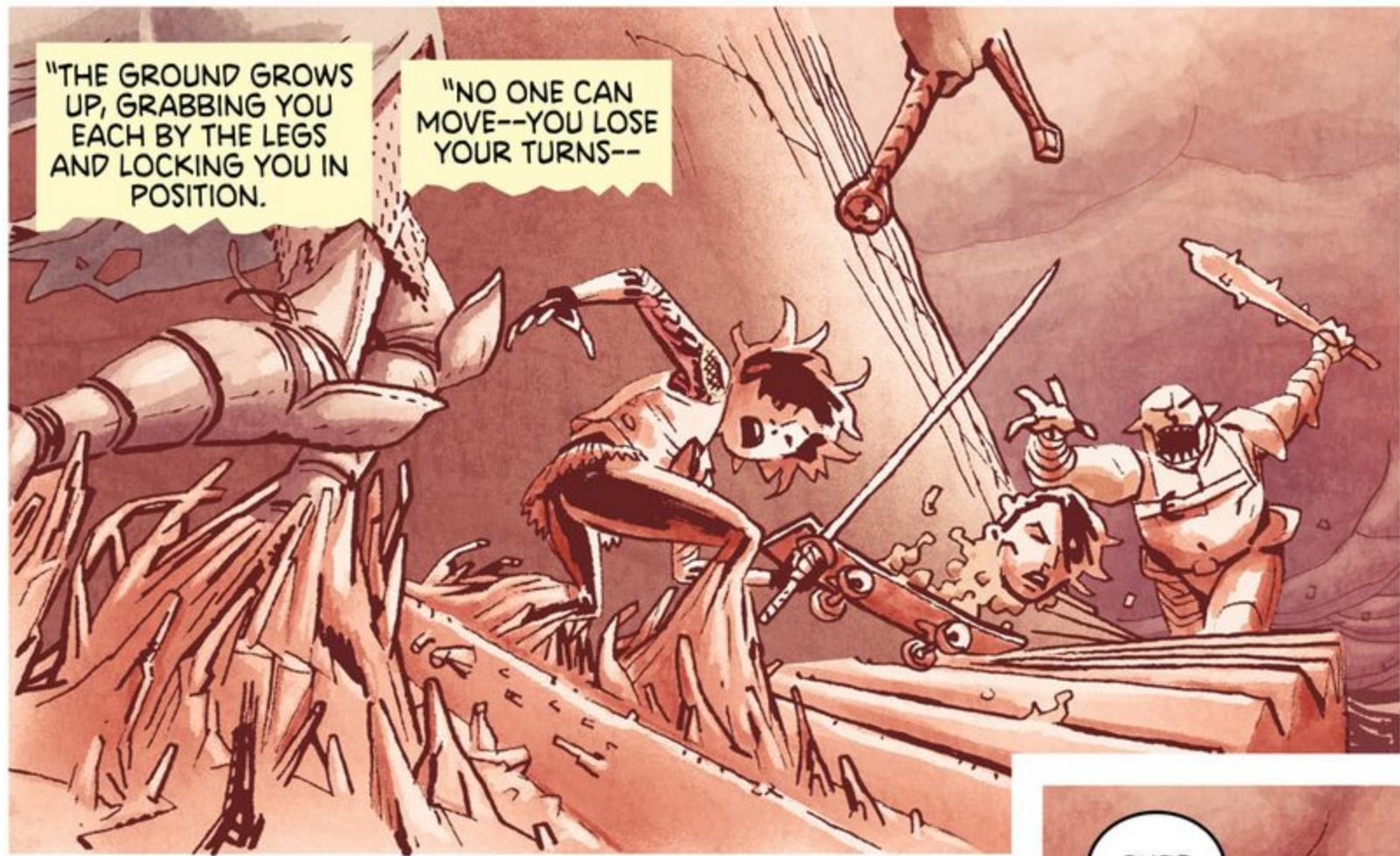


"...AND LIFTS IT AT SQUANT."

YOUR KING WILL BE DEAD!

YOU WILL NEVER SACRIFICE THE RELIC!

GREREZZZZZZ



"THE GROUND GROWS UP, GRABBING YOU EACH BY THE LEGS AND LOCKING YOU IN POSITION."

"NO ONE CAN MOVE--YOU LOSE YOUR TURNS--"



"--ALLOWING THE RED OGRE TO CLAIM THE ROT RELIC!"

TUCHAS THE SKATE TURD IS MINE!



I TOLD YOU I'M NOT PLAYING.



DUDE.

LEAVE ME THE **FUCK** OUT OF THIS.



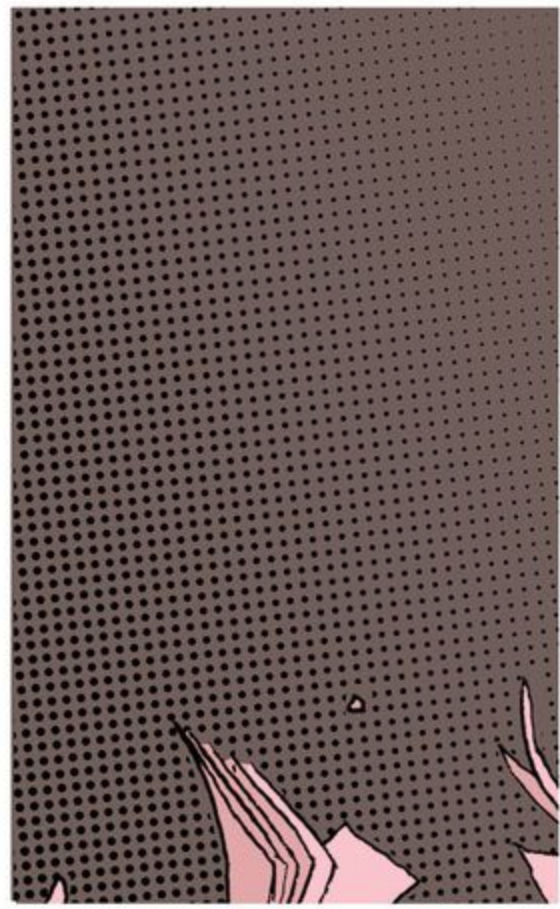
I KNOW YOU'RE NOT.

TUCHAS, THE SKATE TURD, IS A MAGIC RELIC I FOUND IN THE DEMONS AND DEMIGODS MANUAL, IT BEARS NO RESEMBLANCE TO YOU.



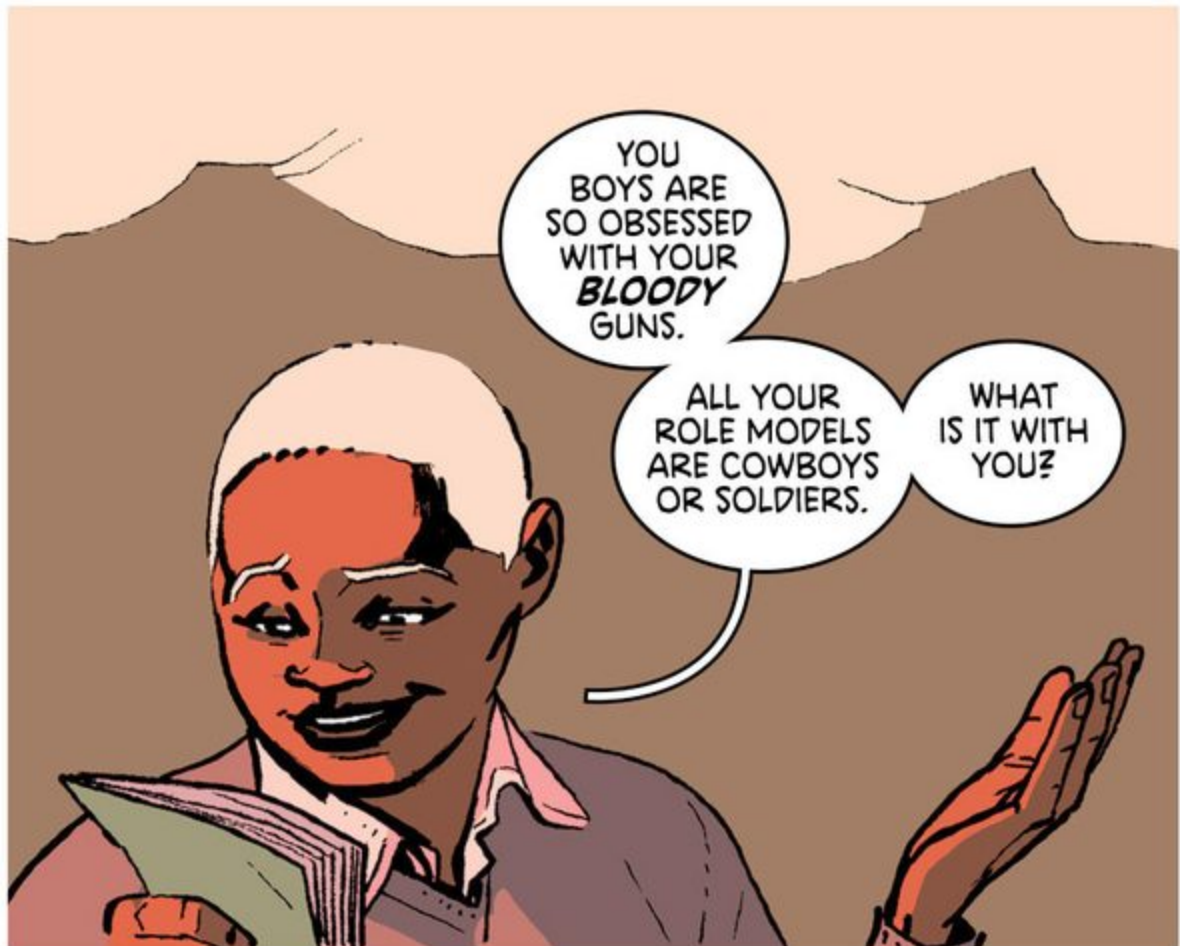
HAHAHA!

THRUMP



G.I. JOE, THE NAM, THE PUNISHER--
UNGH.

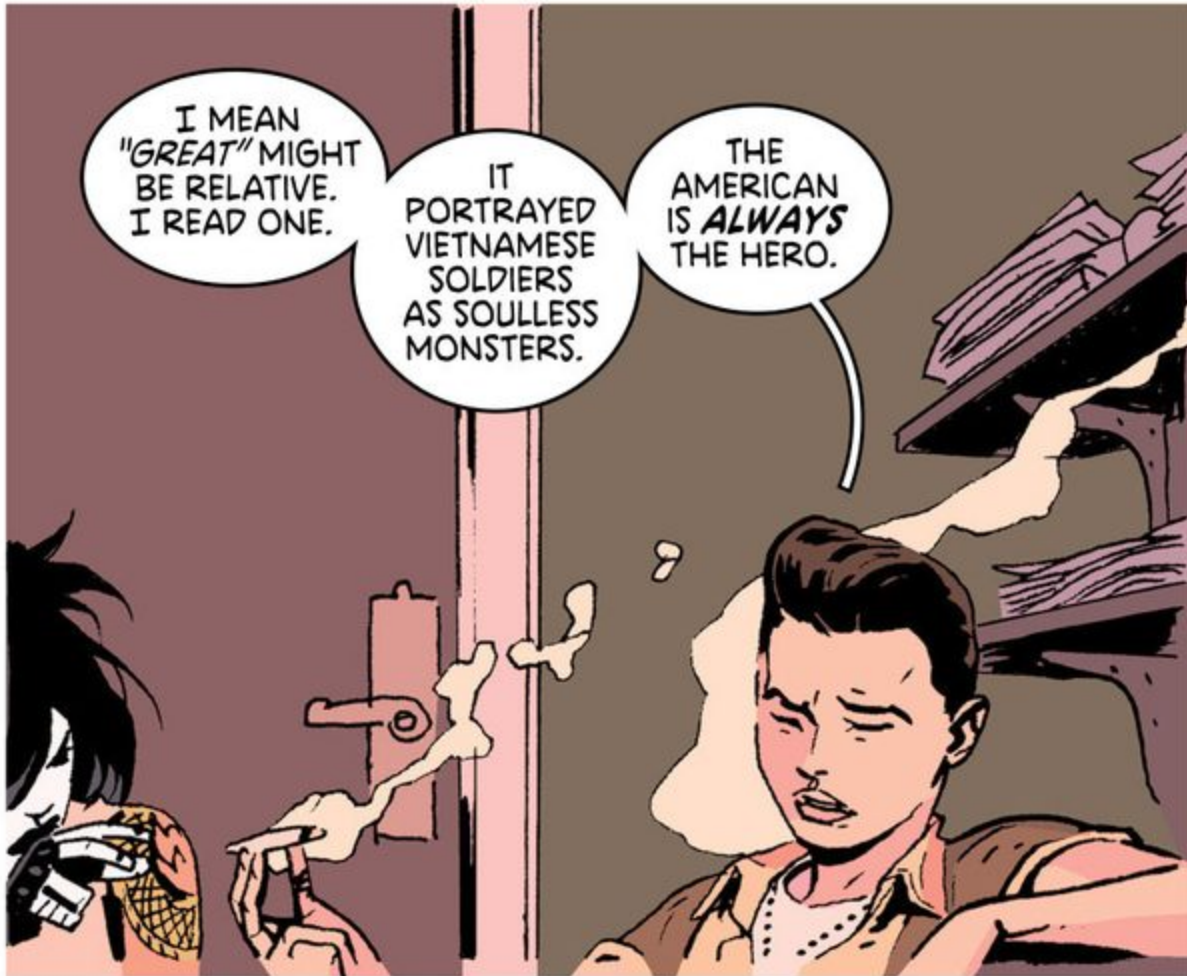
GUNS, SWEAT AND MACHO SILLINESS.

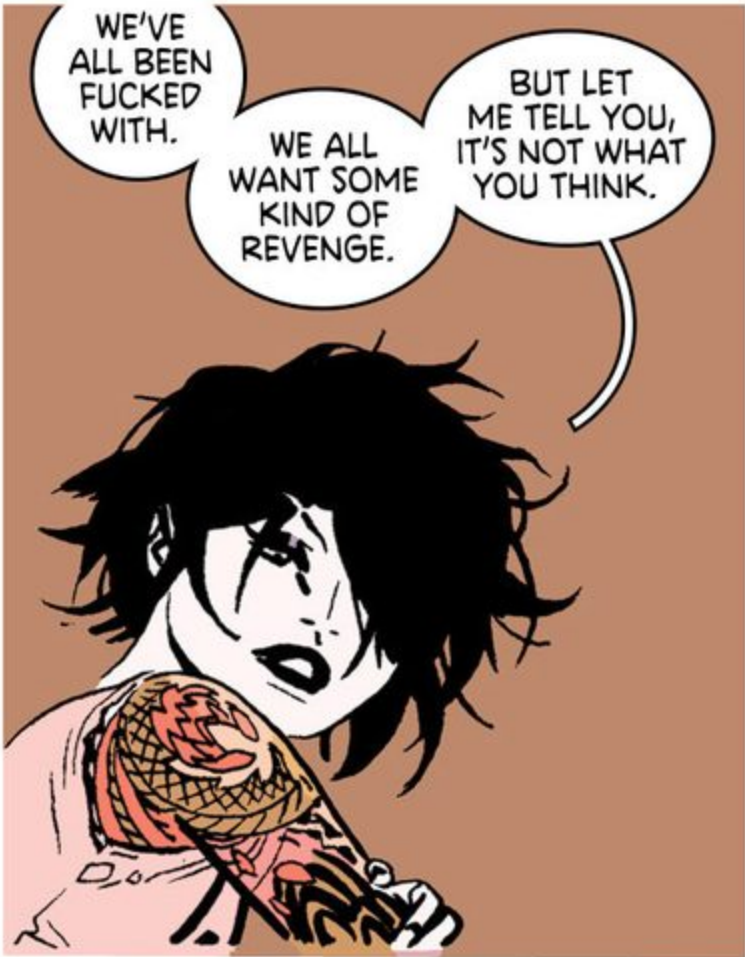


YOU BOYS ARE SO OBSESSED WITH YOUR **BLOODY** GUNS.

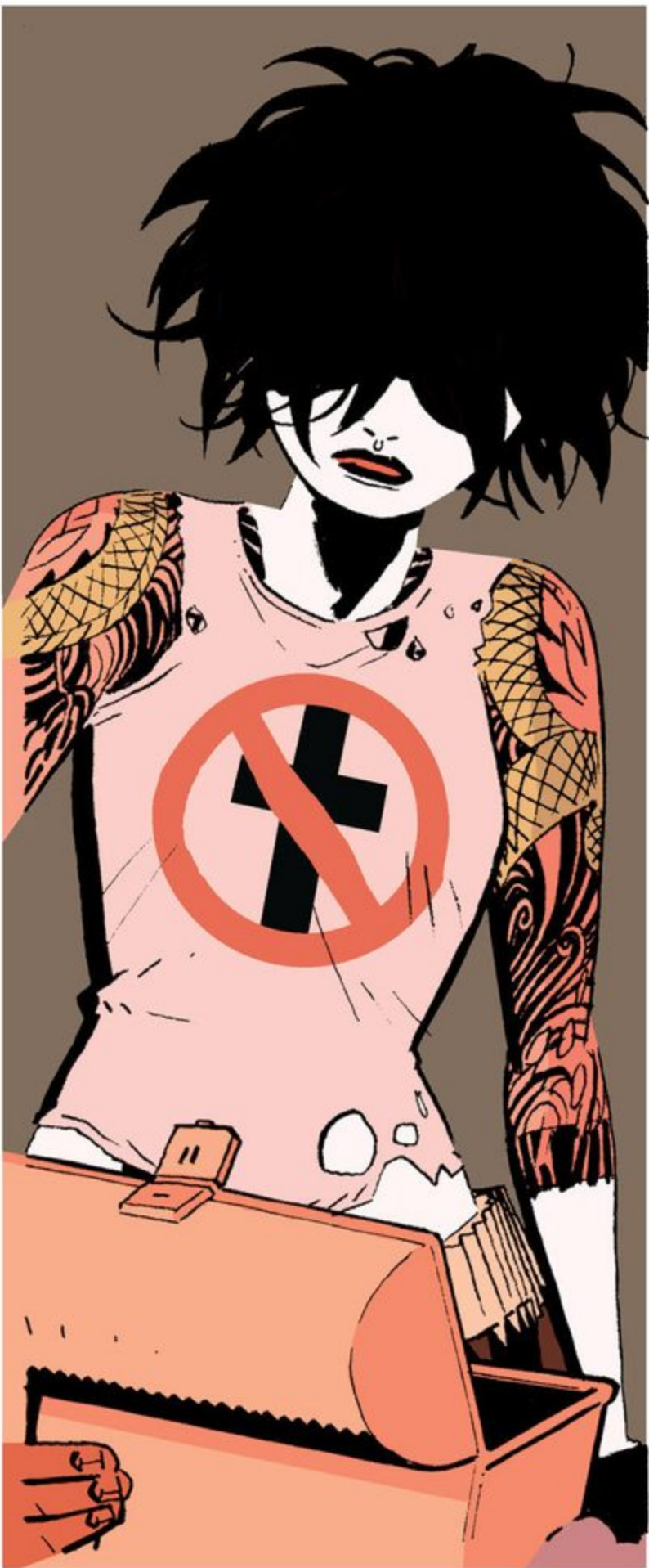
ALL YOUR ROLE MODELS ARE COWBOYS OR SOLDIERS.

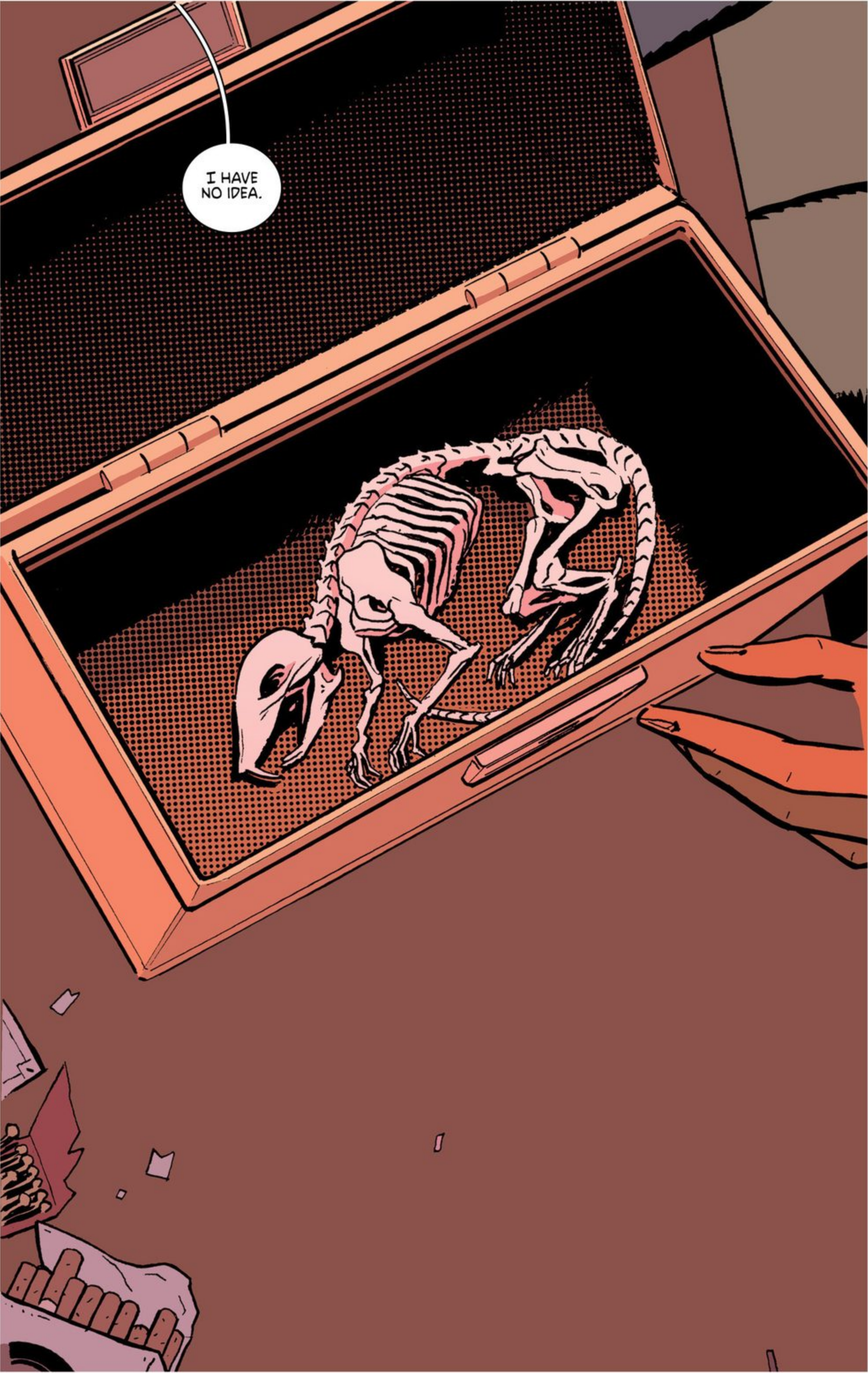
WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?











TO BE CONTINUED...

DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Send comments and questions to
WriteRemender@gmail.com!
Mark letters "OK to print".

Double, double, toil and trouble. Is history going to repeat itself at Kings Dominion?! When I write those cheese dick PR lines, I hear it in the voice of the guy who did the voiceovers on the original Batman. That one I did for sure.

You people have been writing in, and because you are people, and deserve to be treated like people, I will be a people pleaser and respond. Let's take some calls.

Dear Rick/Wes/Lee/Rus/Sebastian,

I love your comic book. It's over-reacting first issue. It takes guts not to let the readers in on any more than you do your POV character. Less, even, considering we don't know anything about this boys' home atrocity that brought the SFPD crashing down on Marcus with all its might, a year (or more) after the fact. The way you use this story-related uncertainty and confusion to let us tap into the unmoored desperation of your homeless orphan is a great move, and to me, it paid off. I'm hooked; enough that I went back to [nigh-monopolistic purveyor of digital comics] and got nine additional issues in their current half-off DEADLY CLASS sale.

The idea is to plan your reveals in the outline stage. Write it all and then dole it out only as needed. Glad you enjoyed it enough to keep reading.

I'm always a bit flabbergasted when a good old assembly line style comic feels like an auteur's statement; it's a testament that this form still has plenty of life in it, however much the purists among us seem to preach that only cartoonists can make true art in this medium. This book, though, it's put together in a way where every g-d decision made, by everyone involved, feeds into the next one, in a way that makes it impossible to see the seams. If it wasn't made by one person, it should at least have been the work of a close-knit gang locked in the same room, and not five people spread out over a continent. That's the case, which makes it even more impressive.

Humbling too, to see collaborators putting so much trust in each other: all that negative space left by the pencils, and every inch of it carefully utilized by the colors and lettering. (By the way, you know you're dealing with a real comic when those role designations start feeling reductive, inadequate).

Good to hear. This isn't a classic assembly line book. Wes and I co-own it; we collaborate on every detail. We are friends who like to get on the phone and talk story, talk covers, talk layouts. We loop in Se-

bastian and Jordan and Rus at early stages, and we all have a voice, we all contribute to every step. And while I enjoy the uniquely singular visual of a lone cartoonist writing and drawing, I find when you have a writer and an artist who are both inspired they bring more to the table as they don't have to spread themselves so thin and can better focus on their one part of the job.

With writing that understands the potential of writing and text in comics, as a counterpoint, as percussive accents, as timekeeping. F--k, people; the way the story shifts from the compressed morass of a year spent living rough, into a breathless, none-more-comics action sequence, into an aftermath reveal of a secret world that in contrast feels perfunctory... It's so hilariously well executed; I'm giddy from reading it. No other medium can do this. That last observation ("perfunctory") was not meant as a knock, by the way; I love the way in which the nothing-matters numbness of Marcus' hopeless previous existence creeps into everything that follows. Trauma and despair aren't easily chased away, not by adrenaline, not by peeks into the unknown (and the ludicrous).

I hope that same note keeps ringing throughout the series, and even if it fades eventually, I'm sure it'll be replaced by something equally real.

Thank you for the music;

all the best,

Karl Ruben Weseth
Oslo, Norway

P.S. I didn't mention the editing explicitly above, but it's heartening to see a collaborative creator-owned Image book including an editor in its ensemble. Knowing it's by choice says something about the importance of the role in this constellation, and the spectacular way in which all these voices are conducted speaks volumes about the quality of the behind-the-scenes work.

When I came back to creator-owned comics it was a wonderful twist of fate that Sebastian had left Marvel and was able to join us. I did full-time creator-owned comics from 2004-2008 without an editor; it was all me, and it was crazy hard. No second brain to bounce a story off of, no one to help go over the dialogue pass and point out rough spots, no one to help keep artists on schedule or deal with the publisher... it sucked. There is no chance we'd have such a great line of comics that ship with such regularity without Sebastian.

P.P.S. The new SubRosa record was my soundtrack of choice tonight, both for comics reading and for

letter-hacking. Doom with fiddles and clean vocals from Utah is pretty far away from eighties west coast hardcore, but it works.

Thank you for writing in. I love that the books make it around the world now. Love hearing from people so far away who respond to what we're doing.

Dear Mr. Remender,

I'd just like to say that I absolutely adore DEADLY CLASS. The writing is; maybe, the art is great, coloring, lettering, the whole shebang!

That being said, I feel completely betrayed.

And no, it's not because you killed Marcus, or Maria, or Willie, or Billy, or any of that biz. That stuff has been really hard to take, and I could discuss it more, but that's not really what I want to talk about because it's not what's hurting me most. I read issue 22 yesterday, and it was fantastic, but then I got to the letters page.

And I read that there's a TV adaptation in the works.

Okay, maybe I'm overreacting, but it felt like a gut punch. Really! I got the wind knocked out of me and everything while I sat in disbelief! How could this happen? And wait a second, the great Mr. Wes Craig is here to tell me that you, Rick Remender, are too busy to respond to a few letters?! Because you're busy with a tv show?! What the hell? It's just, for some reason I thought it was about the comics, you know?

As someone who has dumped his entire waking life into drawing and writing comics for 20 years I'm not losing any sleep because I can't also do every letters page. I'm sorry that having the series co-creator and artist answer those letters left such a bad taste. Blame it on Canada and Wes' general upbringing there. The real point of your letter, Wes is a monster.

I mean, please, tell me how the hell a television adaptation will add to the greatness of the comic. I mean seriously, there isn't any way you can convince me that anything on screen could hold a torch to Wes Craig's art.

What if we make a great show and then hundreds of thousands of people find the book and are exposed to Wes' great art and poor letters page skills? The show is it's own thing, being created by a lot of different people who all love what we've created in the book. It's cool if you don't watch the show; we'll still be locked at our desks making the comics, so good news.

I've read all of your comics, okay? After that last issue of the first arc of DEADLY CLASS came out, it made for such a long summer. I couldn't wait to get more.

And I cheered when you left Marvel. Because yeah, Marvel's Marvel, but Uncanny Avengers wasn't very good, but whatever, your Image stuff, I felt, was where you were letting loose. And I thought it was about the comics and I loved it.

Isn't my turning down a job writing both the Avengers and X-Men flagship titles to do my own books "for the comics" enough for you?

And I get it, there are plenty of comics, even Image and independent ones getting adapted into tv shows, it's cool. I don't watch any of them, but hey, that's what a lot of people who make comics are about, so sure, whatever.

Or they are people who dump their hearts and time into creating new ideas in comics, collaborating with others to build those ideas, to create a book from thin air, with the prodding of no one, with no promise of a paycheck, and one day their work excites other creative people in another medium and they want to adapt it.

But DEADLY CLASS? I never imagined you adapting anything for tv, much less DEADLY CLASS. Why? Like I said, it will only be inferior. And plus, even if it's great as a TV show, why sell out DEADLY CLASS? The comic is so punk rock that it makes no sense to me why that would be the one to do.

Ah, ye old punk rock "sell-out" indictment. I've been writing and drawing strange creator-owned comics since 1997 and kept doing it for years and years for no money, no acclaim, and in most cases no readers. Haven't I earned my indie comic credentials by giving my life and love over to it for decades with no promise of anything other than the completion of a book? I also got a hunched back from sitting all day. So there.

Like, could you imagine if someone approached Saya and asked if they could buy the rights to make a movie about the recent events in her life? She'd totally just flick a cigarette butte at them and tell them to fuck off! But hey, you write the comic, so you tell me what she'd say.

I guess I don't see any connection between the motivation of a 17-year-old Japanese assassin and a grown man who tells stories for a living. I'm excited to see if we can translate this comic into television, to tell tales of drug-addled '80s teens with an authentic snapshot of the era I grew up in.

I don't know; maybe I'm over reacting. Am I rambling? Yeah, probably. But I'm hurt. And I won't watch the show. I was so mad yesterday that I can't say for sure if I'll even keep reading your books. I'm probably naive. Yeah, I know. But I felt a connection through your work, and now I feel betrayed.

All I can say is we've made a book we love, made it how we want to make it, and some people we respect now want to make it into a show. Selling out comes when we take money to do something we don't feel good about. Selling our creation for a quick buck and walking away from it. Everyone working on the show is just as passionate about it as we are about the book.

Man, I don't know if you'll even read this, but I'll tell you a little bit about myself just for the sake of thoroughness. I recently graduated from college with a degree in studio arts. I love comics! So much so that I've decided that comics are really the core of what I want to devote my life to. Right now I'm making my own comic book. I don't know when I'll get it out there, but I'm drawing pages when I'm not working, and I'm writing it when I am working. (I'm an associate teacher, so no, I don't get paid to write my comic book. I just think of ideas and jot them down when I have a spare moment.) But yeah, it'll happen. And I may be naive, yet again, but my attitude is that I really don't give two shits if I ever get paid a dime for my comics.

I'll be candid here, talk is cheap. Talking about what you're going to do, what you have planned. Talk about how hardcore and real you're going to keep it as you do these things you have yet to do. Hit me up when you've drawn or written 15-20 creator-owned graphic novels for no money. Call me when you're in your 30s, and you can't afford to treat a family member's illness because of your dedication to continuing to do creator-owned comics. When you can't afford diapers for your new baby. Talk to me when you've lived in a converted garage with no heater next to a freeway while working seven days a week for free on a book people will likely not read or give a fuck about. I'm just saying, we've done that, we love the books, we've given everything we have to them, but we have families and lives and we do like to get paid enough to live.

Or for that matter if anyone ever reads them. I firmly believe that I was put on this earth to make comics for, well, for someone. If not just for myself. I love comics! The medium speaks to me in a way that nothing else does. With comics, I can both read them, and feel a great connection to the creators, and also make them, and feel a great purpose almost. I make them and feel a sort of

satisfaction and fulfillment and angst and frustration and joy that nothing else does for me. And I've felt very connected to your books as a reader.

That's nice to hear.

So after all that, I hope maybe you can understand a little bit of what I've been feeling these last 24 hours since I found out about the show. It just sucks. I know you're only writing the pilot apparently, but that's not really my point. I'm not trying to call you a sellout or preach to you or whatever it is. I guess I'm venting at you. I mean, okay, maybe I'm calling you a sellout a little bit.

Anyways, I still really dig the comic, and I want to keep reading, but I just, I dunno. You tell me. Tell me I'm overreacting, tell me I'm an immature butt hole, I don't know, just do what you need to do.

Sincerely,
Cody B.

Life has lessons to teach us all. Let's circle back around in a few years and see how you feel. We gave our lives over to this. We suffered in isolation and poverty for it. I quit every job I ever had from Warner Bros to Fox to EA to Marvel, I left the paycheck, the "big properties," and the safety and gave my life to this, again and again.

I wish you the best in the pursuit of your goals.

(Swear word, swear word, mother swear word sons of swear word. Swear word).hate to do it, but that's also in angry tone. For some reason, I thought that Marcus was going to be alive somehow. Whether the blade missed the heart, Saya whispers play dead. I don't know. Something. Anyways. Just read the "New" DEADLY CLASS. Still fantastic, the whole DC team. Good, read.

P.S. sorry for my harsh language earlier.

Shane Weeks

Sorry, Shane. Bad times for some of the old cast for sure. But maybe there is some good payback coming to the people who done them wrong? Maybe some cathartic revenge is waiting around the corner? Man, I hope so.

That's it for this month.

See you in 30 days for Halloween at Kings Dominion,

Rick

FAN ART

Send fan art to: WriteRemender@gmail.com!



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